

CHANGING SKILLS FOR A CHANGING WORLD

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

The 'Changing skills for a Changing world' conference took place in Turin on 7-8 June 2017, bringing together more than 300 delegates from ETF partner countries, EU Member States, EU institutions, international organisations, social partners, enterprises, civic society and experts in the field of vocational education and training (VET). The conference was followed online by over 5,000 people through live streaming and Facebook live.

The 2016-17 Torino Process consultations in the ETF's partner countries point to progress in formulating VET policies and modernising institutional frameworks to reinforce the contribution of VET to economic and social development. Particular effort has gone into moving towards participatory models of VET governance, modernising qualification systems and creating mechanisms for better matching the supply and demand for skills.

However, impact at system level remains limited, and countries continue to face common challenges such as the attractiveness of VET, access to skills development and lifelong learning for young people and adults, and the slow pace of modernisation of training provision.

Fast changing economic needs, technological developments and social demands emerging across all countries create new challenges and opportunities for VET and skills development. This frames a shared development perspective for partner countries, reinforced by the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and inspired by policy initiatives like the new Skills Agenda for Europe.

Through plenary and workshop sessions, and the marketplace of ideas, the conference highlighted the following priorities for future action together:

MORE RELEVANT POLICIES FOR SYSTEM IMPACT

The pace of change in society and the economy creates challenges for VET. Policies need to target present and future needs, ensure systems are adaptable and flexible, and support the delivery of results that fit the specific context and meet the diverse needs of all citizens for economic and social cohesion and inclusion. Cooperation needs to be extended and the development and implementation of VET policies need to be taken out of government ministries and made more integrated and holistic to ensure that skills contribute to the economic development, innovation and social inclusion strategies of each community, region and country.

GREATER ACCESS TO VET AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Action is urgently required to address the challenges of accessibility and attractiveness of VET, now and especially for the future. To prepare for demographic and societal changes, VET needs to reach out to more users and expand opportunities, in particular, by opening up new pathways for adults. VET policies need to anticipate future needs and embed change rapidly in the system. To make systems more attractive and accessible, countries need to build on innovative practices, reinforce skills anticipation mechanisms, and adopt more flexible and diversified pathways for skills development. This includes revising programmes, delivery mechanisms, certification and skills recognition to make lifelong learning a reality for all citizens.



BUILDING ON INNOVATION

As VET changes in tune with changes in society, innovation is key to transforming the system. VET needs not only to respond to digital and technological change, but to build on it to create new infrastructure for VET development and delivery. Through innovation, VET and VET governance can be transformed, ushering in new models and creating opportunities to support better delivery, cooperation among actors and diversification of provision. Partner countries need to make a more systematic effort to develop and adapt curricula and programmes, to invest in teacher and trainer development, and build on partnerships with the private sector and with communities to drive transformation.

MAKING COMPETENCES WORK FOR THE FUTURE

What skills are needed for the future? This question was asked repeatedly throughout the conference and the online interaction. This calls for more in-depth analysis of future skills needs, and recognising that in a changing world, people need skills for change. A key issue is introducing core competences across the VET system, focusing on entrepreneurship, critical thinking, and creativity, which are vital for innovation and unlocking the potential of individuals and communities. More effort is needed to build a new generation of competences and re-equip VET systems through teacher and trainer development, to enable providers to innovate and play an active part in the innovation ecosystem. This will enable VET to co-create innovative solutions and contribute actively to meeting the needs of today's and tomorrow's society.

BUILDING TRUST TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

Trust is a fundamental principle of any functioning system, especially one that embraces innovation, involves multiple actors and opens up to new modalities of delivery. Innovating and transforming systems depends on transparency and accountability, including clarity about the role of actors in the system and an improved quality assurance and management across the system. Countries need to give more attention to disclosure of information, communication of policies and results to citizens, and access to evidence. This means reinforcing their systems for quality assuring and monitoring VET policies and their results.

FOCUSING ON PEOPLE, PEOPLE, AND PEOPLE

The conference ended with the commitment to step up efforts to make VET more relevant to all citizens, and make policies work for the well-being of society. Achieving this entails:

- (a) Maximizing the impact for each citizen;
- (b) Focusing on developing the competences of teachers, trainers, employers, administrators, policy makers, and all those involved in building and delivering VET policies;
- (c) Bringing new players to the policy table, breaking out of inherited practices and habits and looking towards the future;
- (d) Building and engaging with learning communities, which can support, create and benefit from innovation;
- (e) Listening to citizens, to the needs of society, to young people, adults, employees, unemployed and innovators through systematic evidence collection and consultation to continuously improve and develop the system.

The ETF will support partner countries to shape and implement actions towards the realisation of these priorities, through its thematic strategic projects outlined in its Single Programming Document and annual Work Programme, continuing the policy dialogue and policy learning at national, regional and cross-country level. The ETF, across its projects will promote the co-design of solutions and focus on relevance and impact through innovation and cooperation across the policy cycle.

The next round of the Torino Process in 2019-2020 will evaluate the results achieved since 2010, and look forward to 2030, as VET continues to change in response to the needs of today's and tomorrow's citizens.

Conference materials are available on the conference blog at blog.torinoprocess.eu and the ETF website: www.etf.europa.eu. The Torino Process reports are at www.torinoprocess.eu